
**Introduced by Senator Wright
(Principal coauthor: Senator Price)**

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bradford, Brown, Hall, Holden,
Jones-Sawyer, Mitchell, and Weber)

January 9, 2013

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 7—Relative to Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 7, as introduced, Wright. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: observance.

This measure would designate that January 21, 2013, be observed as the official memorial of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birth, and commemorate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and the Work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement in changing public policy in California and in the United States of America. This measure would also recognize the anniversaries of the Emancipation Proclamation and the March on Washington in connection with the advancement of civil rights.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, This year, 2013, marks the anniversary of two
- 2 important anniversaries in the history of African Americans in the
- 3 United States, the 150th Anniversary of the Emancipation
- 4 Proclamation in 1863 and the 150th Anniversary of the March on
- 5 Washington in 1963; and
- 6 WHEREAS, The Emancipation Proclamation, a wartime
- 7 measure issued by President Abraham Lincoln, freed relatively
- 8 few slaves, but it fueled the fire of the enslaved to strike for their

1 freedom, often by enlisting in the Union Army, in an effort to
2 dismantle the “peculiar institution” of slavery; and

3 WHEREAS, One hundred years after the Emancipation
4 Proclamation, on August 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
5 and others organized hundreds of thousands of blacks and whites,
6 Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, in a march to the
7 Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. where Dr. King made his
8 famous “I Have a Dream” speech announcing that the days of
9 segregation in the United States were numbered; and

10 WHEREAS, Monday, January 21, 2013, marks the 27th National
11 Celebration of the National Holiday for Dr. Martin Luther King,
12 Jr. and his fight for civil and human rights; and

13 WHEREAS, On Tuesday, January 15, 2013, Dr. Martin Luther
14 King, Jr. would have been 84 years of age; and

15 WHEREAS, On April 10, 1970, California became the first
16 state to pass legislation making Dr. King’s birthday a school
17 holiday and, subsequently, a statewide holiday; and

18 WHEREAS, Representative John Conyers (D-Michigan)
19 submitted the first legislation for a national Martin Luther King,
20 Jr. Holiday, which was signed into law by President Ronald Wilson
21 Reagan, on November 2, 1983; and

22 WHEREAS, January 20, 1986, marked the first observance of
23 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; and

24 WHEREAS, Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement helped
25 change public policy from segregation to integration, resulting in
26 the repeal of the post-Reconstruction era state laws mandating
27 racial segregation in the South known as the “Jim Crow Laws,”
28 thereby leading to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the
29 Voting Rights Act of 1965, and other antidiscrimination laws aimed
30 at ending economic, legal, and social segregation in America; and

31 WHEREAS, Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement helped
32 change public policy from legal and socially acceptable
33 discrimination and segregation to an open and accessible policy
34 of racial integration leading to equal participation and access to
35 primary and higher education, housing, employment, transportation,
36 federal, state, and local governmental elections, and other aspects
37 of public policy relating to human rights; and

38 WHEREAS, These public policy changes at the national level
39 influenced many changes in California that culminated in the
40 passage of the Unruh Civil Rights Act and the Rumford Fair

1 Housing Act, in open enrollment and access to higher education
2 specifically with respect to the California State University and the
3 University of California, and in employment and labor laws,
4 transportation policy, election laws, and other aspects of public
5 policy; and

6 WHEREAS, The unfinished business of Dr. King and the Civil
7 Rights Movement was and is the plight of the poor, the fight against
8 war and for worldwide peace, and the struggle for a fair, equitable,
9 and sensible economic system; and

10 WHEREAS, Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement noted
11 that a majority of Americans lived below the poverty line, and that
12 the huge income gaps between rich and poor called for “changes
13 in the structure of our society”; and

14 WHEREAS, Dr. King, in the last months of his life, began
15 organizing a Poor People’s Campaign to, among other things,
16 assemble “a multiracial army of the poor that would descend on
17 Washington—engaging in nonviolent civil disobedience at the
18 Capitol, if need be—until Congress enacted a poor people’s bill
19 of rights”; and

20 WHEREAS, All of the aforementioned concerns and more
21 continue to be the quest of civil and human rights organizations
22 in the great State of California, across America, and throughout
23 the world; and

24 WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. fought to change public
25 policy from the “self-inflicted wound of segregation to the
26 pluralistic diverse democracy” we continue to construct today; and

27 WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights
28 Movement serve as a model for principled leadership and
29 forward-thinking, bipartisan public policy; now, therefore, be it

30 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
31 *thereof concurring*, That Monday, January 21, 2013, be observed
32 as the official memorial of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birth and
33 his work in the Civil Rights Movement; and be it further

34 *Resolved*, That this day, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the
35 Civil Rights Movement be commemorated for their help in
36 changing public policy from segregation to integration, for the
37 betterment of this, the great State of California and these United
38 States of America; and be it further

39 *Resolved*, That the California Legislature encourages all
40 Americans to pay tribute to the life and works of Dr. Martin Luther

1 King, Jr. through participation in community service projects on
2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; and be it further

3 *Resolved*, That the California Legislature recognizes the inherent
4 value of community service and volunteerism in the creation of a
5 civil society and as a means of nonviolent community progress
6 consistent with the works of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and be
7 it further

8 *Resolved*, That the California Legislature recognizes the benefits
9 of the collaborative work by many organizations that promote,
10 facilitate, and carry out needed service projects nationwide; and
11 be it further

12 *Resolved*, That the California Legislature encourages its
13 members and colleagues to urge their constituents to participate
14 in community service projects; and be it further

15 *Resolved*, That the California Legislature acknowledges that,
16 by serving one's country, one's community, and one's neighbor,
17 our nation makes progress in civility, equality, and unity consistent
18 with the values and life's work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and
19 be it further

20 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit a copy of
21 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.